

## Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 USIE-00 CCO-00 OPR-02 A-01 OMB-01 SAM-01

NEAE-00 /078 W

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O 031537Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7048

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 13717

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, LE

SUBJECT: ATTENTION SHIFTS TO POLITICAL ARENA AS CEASEFIRE HOLDS  
PRECARIOUSLY

REF: BEIRUT 13652 (2NOV 75 1056Z)

1. SUMMARY: PREMIER KARAME HAS PUT TOGETHER A CEASEFIRE THAT IS HOLDING AS OF MIDDAY NOV 3 AND MAY PROVIDE AT LEAST RESPITE FROM FIGHTING. LONG-SIMMERING FEUD BETWEEN HIM AND CHAMOUN DRAWING INCREASED ATTENTION AS TWO MEN APPEAR TO BE ON COLLISION COURSE. OTHERS ARE TRYING TO MEDIATE QUARREL, BUT CHAMOUN COULD REACH POINT OF RESIGNING AND IN ANY CASE LIKELY TAKE HARDER PRO-CHRISTIAN LINE. A POLITICAL BLOW-UP BETWEEN THESE TWO LEADERS COULD EASILY LEAD TO FURTHER CLASHES. END SUMMARY.

2. ALMOST ROUND-THE-CLOCK EFFORTS BY PREMIER KARAME PUT TOGETHER ANOTHER AGREEMENT FOR A CEASEFIRE NOV 2. HE MET FIRST WITH PALESTINIAN AND PHALANGE REPS AND CHAMOUN'S SON DANY IN COMPANY OF GHASSAN TUEINI, ABDULLAH YAFI, AND SECURITY AND ARMY LEADERS. HE MET SEPARATELY WITH LEFTIST GROUPS INCLUDING IBRAHIM QULAYLAT AND COMMUNIST AND PPS REPS. RESULT WAS AGREEMENT TO CEASE FIRING AS OF 0900 NOV 3 AND WITHDRAW ARMED GROUPS FROM "FRICTION POINTS" IN HOTEL DISTRICT, KANTARI, CHIYAH, AIN EL-RUMANNEH. WHEN DEADLINE ARRIVED, WITHDRAWALS HAD NOT OCCURRED, BUT AD HOC "LIAISON COMMITTEES" OF INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES (ISF), PALESTINIAN ARMED STRUGGLE COMMAND (PASC), AND REPS OF RIGHTIST AND LEFTIST GROUPS WERE ON SCENE. FIGHTING HAD ALREADY DIED DOWN CONSIDERABLY ON ALL FRONTS AS OF EVENING NOV 2 AND GENERAL QUIET PREVAILS THROUGH NOON (LOCAL) NOV 3. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE HOPE THAT AT LEAST A TEMPORARY RESPITE IS IN OFFING. HOWEVER, SPORADIC SHOOTING AUDIBLE FROM HOTEL AREA AND CEASEFIRE STILL TOUCH-AND-GO. AT BEST, MOST OBSERVERS PREDICT CEASEFIRE FOR MATTER OF DAYS ONLY (IN VIEW OF SOME, JUST LONG ENOUGH TO LET CITY RESIDENTS RESTOCK BARE CUPBOARDS AND FIGHTERS REPLENISH SUPPLIES).

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3. COASTAL TOWN OF DAMOUR LIKEWISE CALMING DOWN, BUT ISF SOURCE SAID MORNING NOV 3 THAT SITUATION THERE NOT YET UNDER CONTROL. HE WAS OPTIMISTIC AREA WOULD BE PACIFIED AND ROAD OPENED LATER NOV 3. ZAHLE AND BEKAA VALLEY REPORTED QUIET BUT TENSE. DATT HAS FIRM INFO THAT MYSTERIOUS "SYRIAN" FORCES ENTERING BEKAA LAST FEW DAYS ARE UNITS OF PLA. DECISION TAKEN OVER WEEKEND TO PUT FURTHER ADDITIONAL ARMY TROOPS AT DISPOSAL OF ISF IN BEIRUT COMMERCIAL AREAS AND TO USE ARMY

FOR SECURITY ON MAIN HIGHWAYS..

4. ALTHOUGH SOUKS THAT HAVE MOVED ONTO HAMRA CONTINUE TO BUSTLE WITH BUSINESS, FEW OTHER BEIRUT SHOPS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF GROCERY STORES AND BAKERIES ARE OPEN. SECURITY HAS NOT YET IMPROVED ENOUGH TO ALLOW DISTRIBUTION OF GASOLINE AND COOKING GAS, EVEN THOUGH STORAGE FACILITIES AT DORA HAVE BOTH ON HAND. HOWEVER, DIESEL FUEL IS BEING DISTRIBUTED UNDER ARMED ESCORT TO HOSPITALS, HOTELS AND BAKERIES. TRAINS CONTINUE TO SUPPLY THERMO-ELECTRIC GENERATING PLANT AT JIA (ON THE COAST MIDWAY BETWEEN SIDON AND DAMOUR) FROM MEEDRECO REFINERY NEAR SIDON. NEWSPAPERS REPORT THAT ONLY NINE SHIPS NOW REMAIN IN BEIRUT HARBOR BECAUSE OTHERS HAVE STEAMED AWAY.

5. CALMING SECURITY TREND HAS SHIFTED SPOTLIGHT TO POLITICAL ARENA, WHERE KARAME-CHAMOUN FEUD HEATING UP. KARAME'S RECENT DIG IN PARLIAMENT AT CHAMOUN'S NATIONAL LIBERALS (BEIRUT 13256) WAS FOLLOWED BY VEILED ACCUSATION FROM HIM ON TELEVISION OCT 31 THAT PHALANGE AND NATIONAL LIBERALS HAD VIOLATED CEASEFIRE (BEIRUT 13628). CHAMOUN RESPONDED BY ACCUSING KARAME OF "SEEING WITH ONE EYE". RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO MEN, NEVER VERY GOOD, ARE AT NEW LOW. CHAMOUN BELIEVES KARAME USURPED HIS (CHAMOUN'S AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY WHEN HE CONVENED SPECIAL "SECURITY COMMITTEE" AT SERAIL. CHAMOUN SEEMS DRIFTING INTO CLOSER ALLIANCE WITH GEMAYEL.

6. KARAME HAS CALLED FOR MEETING TODAY OF FULL "NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE". IF CHAMOUN SHOWS UP, THERE COULD BE VERBAL FIREWORKS BETWEEN HIM AND PREMIER. HOWEVER, AS IN PAST QUARRELS OF THIS NATURE, WILLING MEDIATORS ARE AT WORK. GHASSAN TUEINI AND, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, PRES FRANGIE CURRENTLY SAID TO BE WORKING FOR RECONCILIATION. KARAME AND CHAMOUN ARE SCHEDULED TO LUNCH TOGETHER NOV 3.  
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7. KARAME INTENDS SCHEDULE MEETING OF CABINET NOV 4 (SOME REPORTS SAY POSSIBLY LATE NOV 3) TO RATIFY KARAME'S NEW CEASEFIRE MEASURES. THIS MAY BE PART OF PREMIER'S EFFORTS TO HEAD OFF CHAMOUN'S ANTICIPATED ATTACK BY GETTING SEAL OF APPROVAL FROM CABINET MAJORITY.

8. OTHER ACTIONS REPORTEDLY BEING CONTEMPLATED BY KARAME INCLUDE EFFORT TO BRING GEMAYEL AND 'ARAFAT TOGETHER IN NEXT FEW DAYS AND, FURTHER DOWN THE PIKE, EXPANSION OF CABINET TO INCLUDE BOTH GEMAYEL AND JUMBLATT. LATTER PLAN, HOWEVER, OBVIOUSLY CONTINGENT ON EVENTS NEXT FEW DAYS AND PARTICULARLY CHAMOUN'S ATTITUDE.

9. MODERATE BEIRUT DAILY "AN-NAHAR" REPORTS NOV 3 THAT

SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM MAY RETURN SOON ON ANOTHER PEACE MISSION. AN ADVISER OF KARAME TOLD US PRIVATELY HE HAD HEARD TALK OF SAME POSSIBILITY, BUT HE COULD NOT CONFIRM THIS AS DEFINITE NEWS.

10. COMMENT: CHAMOUN ATTITUDE CURRENTLY THE KEY PROBLEM. SOME OBSERVERS CONSIDER HIS RESIGNATION A STRONG POSSIBILITY, BUT OTHERS REMEMBERING SIMILAR QUARRELS IN RECENT PAST DOUBT AFFAIR WILL REACH THIS STAGE. SHOULD HE WITHDRAW FROM CABINET, RESULT NOT NECESSARILY FATAL TO THAT BODY, BUT CONFESSIOAL EQUILIBRIUM WOULD BE TIPPED AND ONLY REAL SPOKESMAN OF CHRISTIANS REMOVED. FURTHER ARMED CLASHES COULD EASILY FOLLOW AS POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE REHEATS.  
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## Message Attributes

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